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Secretary Marlene Cummings Retires

Former Governor Tommy G. Thompson announced that Marlene Cummings is retiring after serving 14 years as Secretary of the Department of Regulation and Licensing to pursue private interests.

Former Governor Thompson thanked Secretary Cummings for her years of outstanding work and guidance on licensing issues.

Secretary Cummings, who will retire from state service on February 25, 2001, had served with Former Governor Thompson since the beginning of his administration and was one of his first cabinet appointments.

OPTOMETRY EXAMINING BOARD

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“Marlene truly is a great friend, a great leader and a source of stability within the administration,” Former Governor Thompson said. “We will miss her sound judgment and her innovative ideas. She has worked well with the licensing boards and her resignation will be a great loss for hundreds of board members and the entire state of Wisconsin.”

Former Governor Thompson said Secretary Cummings has had an extremely successful tenure that emphasized changes in the handling of disciplinary complaints and adopted innovative disciplinary procedures. Her innovations have included an agency time-line for handling complaints, the use of mandated education and a procedure for managing professionals with drug and alcohol addictions.

“My 14 years of service in Former Governor Thompson’s administration have been both inspiring and challenging,” Secretary Cummings said. “We were often at the forefront of significant business and health care developments.” Secretary Cummings also thanked Former Governor Thompson for his encouragement and the opportunity to serve, and wished him great success as a member of President Bush’s cabinet.

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Secretary Cummings says she is retiring to devote more time to her family. She said that she also needs more time for research and writing.

Madison Area Technical College Offers Optometric Technician Program Online First Technician Program Offered Online in the US

Driven by employer demand to make training available to more people, Madison Area Technical College (MATC) has created the first on-line Optometric Technician Program. According to the American Optometric Association (AOA) News, "insufficient training is probably the single most common complaint among Optometric office personnel from the front desk to pre-testing to the dispensary." MATC began offering its first on-line Optometric Technician courses this fall and will offer additional courses in the spring semester.

Managed health care has and will continue to influence the delivery of eye care services in the U.S. While the fees for managed care health plans will continue to rise, the fees for doctors and clinics will remain discounted. This has prompted a trend throughout the medical profession in which optometrists schedule more appointments each day and delegate more duties to paraprofessional personnel. MATC's online program will provide greater access to the training needed by these workers.

To participate in the program, students must have earned a high school diploma or GED and must be employed or affiliated with an eyecare office that provides them access to the equipment needed for most courses. The curriculum includes written and video materials in addition to work with a professional mentor in the workplace. Professional mentors are provided with a Mentor Guide Book that provides procedural checklists and information on proctoring examinations and setting up instructional laboratory assignments.

"One of my employees is currently taking an on-line course from MATC's Optometric Technician Program," states Dr. Timothy Pease, a Doctor of Optometry based in Green Bay, Wisconsin. "We are encouraging our employees to seek additional training, and this

option is a great resource. The Mentor Guide Book has provided the necessary resources to assist me in this process. The reality is that this course is fun for the entire office to participate in, and it encourages the learning process of our entire team. I would recommend the course to any office that wants to stay on the leading edge of ophthalmic technology."

The first two online courses, Optical Dispensing 1 and Ocular Anatomy, are 17-week courses that began in late August. Activities include on-line discussions, assignments, virtual tutorials, coffeehouse chats, guest instructors and professional mentors. The program began as a CD-ROM project and evolved into an on-line project once organizers realized that on-line students could access video recordings, that a professional mentor could provide assistance in procedural work in the lab and could proctor tests as needed.

"This is convenient for our students. Many of them enroll part-time due to outside commitments with family and work," states MATC Optometric Technician Program Director Lynn Konkel. "We provide one of the few Optometric Technician programs in the country and are the only college to begin providing the curriculum on-line. We're filling a need evidenced by inquiries we've received from potential students as far away as Georgia."

MATC worked with Leadership Online, a Milwaukee-based firm, to redesign the classroom-based course content for the Web. Development began in March 2000 with most of the work happening this summer. In addition to developing the text that appears online, photographs, video footage and graphics were developed to supplement the curriculum.

This online program requires home or work access to the Internet and a computer capable of playing multimedia. The computer needs a system memory of 16-32 MB of RAM or more and a processor fast enough to play video files. QuickTime, needed to run the video files, can be downloaded free of charge over the Internet.

According to Konkel, space is very limited for these courses as they are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Students can enroll

in the Internet-based program by completing the Student Information Form located on the Optometric Technician Program homepage available under Programs at the MATC's Website, www.madison.tec.wi.us. After completion, a student can submit their application with the click of a button. Additional information is available by contacting Lynn Konkel at (608) 246-6557 or by email at eyetech@madison.tec.wi.us.

Board Activities

Continuing Education: The committee composed of Drs. Hubbell, Griebenow, and Sarazen, reviews submissions for CE course approval on an ongoing basis. To help facilitate the process, submissions for approval should:

- Be submitted by the course provider on an application provided by the board and shall include the title, general description and an outline of the course, the dates, the location, the name and qualifications of the instructor of the course, and the sponsor of the course. COPE approved CE may be approved by the board without receipt of a course approval application from the provider as long as the subject matter is appropriate.
- Be subject matter pertaining to therapeutic pharmaceuticals, removal of superficial foreign bodies from the eye or from an appendage to the eye, responsible use of controlled substances and substance abuse concerns, new drugs used for ophthalmic therapeutic purposes which have been approved by the FDA or other topics as designed by the board.
- Be monitored by the provider to certify attendance of each participant.

Contact the CE sponsor to verify the course approval.

Standards and Practice Committee: The committee, composed of Drs. Hinson and Griffin, and public member Lynne LeCount, is currently reviewing and developing protocol which the board can use when addressing matters relating to scope of practice. Work to date includes methodology to assist in interpreting current statutes and review of optometric education and continuing education.

Statutes and Rules Committee: The committee, composed of Chris Hubbell, OD; Kerry Griebenow, OD; and Lynne LeCount, is currently developing administrative rules that would make it unprofessional conduct for an optometrist to fail to release to a patient a contact lens prescription for replacement contact lenses.

ARBO: A board member will be selected to attend the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry meeting in June.

FYI

Continuing education requirements for renewal of TPA Certificate: Renewal of TPA Certificates will take place on or before January 1, 2002. By this date, a certificate holder shall complete 30 hours of approved CE relating to the diagnosis and management of eye disease or removal of superficial foreign bodies from the eye or from an appendage to the eye. Seven of the 30 hours must be in the diagnosis and management of glaucoma, and 2 of the 30 hours must relate to the responsible use of controlled substances and substance abuse concerns, new drugs used for ophthalmic therapeutic purposes which have been approved by the FDA OR other topics as designated by the board (a list of approved topics designated by the board for purposes of satisfying the 2 hour course requirement under section Opt 6.04 (1) may be obtained from the board at PO Box 8935, Madison, WI 53708). To obtain credit, the CE must have been acquired in the biennium dated January 1, 2000 to December 31, 2001. Optometrists initially certified WITHIN this biennium shall complete one hour of CE per month or partial month of certification; and one-quarter of the CE hours must be in the diagnosis and management of glaucoma. To obtain credit, an optometrist shall simply sign a statement certifying that the coursework has been completed. However, if audited, an optometrist shall submit certificates of attendance issued by each provider or other evidence of attendance satisfactory to the board.

To find out about COPE approved courses go to www.OptometryCE.org.

To find out about courses approved by the council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE), visit their website at www.OptometryCE.org.

Important Message From the Department of Workforce Development

Failure to pay court-ordered child support may result in the suspension or non-renewal of professional licenses, including those issued by the Department of Regulation and Licensing and regulatory boards.

Recently enacted Wisconsin laws (mandated by federal government) give local child support agencies the ability to request suspension or denial of licenses of people whose names appear on the Child Support Lien Docket and who owe more than \$1,000 or three months' worth of child support.

Past-due child support creates a lien against all of a payer's titled property. The lien is entered into Wisconsin's Child Support Lien Docket when past-due support reaches a specified threshold. In October 2000, the threshold was \$30,000 in past-due support. It is being lowered in stages; the subsequent stage, in January 2001, is \$20,000.

Child support agencies will notify payers at the time their names are added to the Child Support Lien Docket and prior to initiating license suspension action. Satisfaction (payment in full) of the child support lien, or entering into and complying with a plan to pay off the past-due support, will halt license suspension action.

For more information about Child Support Liens and license suspension, please contact your local child support agency.

Support Delinquency Program

1997 Act 191 will begin statewide implementation of its program in early 2001. This act provides the Department of Workforce Development with the authority to direct the Department of Regulation and Licensing to sanction individuals who are delinquent in payments of support or who have failed to comply with subpoenas or warrants issued by county support agencies. Sanctions include suspension of license, denial of application for initial license or denial of applications for renewal of license.

New Workplace Employment Posting Required

A workplace employment posting is now required in Wisconsin work sites employing health care workers. A new Wisconsin law effective June 1, 2000 creates specific employment protection from retaliation for health care workers who report violations of state or federal laws, rules or regulations to enforcement authorities. Further, the retaliation protection extends to health care workers who report situations in which standards of care, based upon either law or professionally recognized accrediting standards, are violated in a way that pose a potential risk to public health or safety.

Work sites required to display the posting include: hospitals, nursing homes, community based residential facilities, and county operated health care facilities. Further, dentists, psychologists, social workers, marriage and family therapists and other professional counselors, optometrists and chiropractic offices are covered by the posting requirement. Pharmacies, hospices and home health agencies, and emergency medical first responders also must display the posting. Failure of a covered employer to post the required posting will result in a \$100 fine. Further, covered employers are required to inform their employees of the rights and remedies available to them under 1999 Wisconsin Act 176.

For a poster or a complete listing of all workplaces covered by the law, contact John Metcalf at WMC, (608) 258-3400, or by e-mail at jmetcalf@wmc.org. Visit the WMC website, www.wmc.org, where you can review all the provisions of 1999 Wisconsin Act 176, as well as the required posting.

To find the web-site go to www.OptometryCE.org.

2001 Meeting Dates

March 16, May 11, July 13, September 14, November 2.

Digests on Web Site:

October 1997, June 1998, December 1998, April 1999, October 1999, May 2000.

Telephone Directory

Automated Phone System for Chiropractic, Acupuncture, Massage Therapists/BodyWorkers, Music, Art & Dance Therapists, Marriage & Family Therapists, Nursing, Optometry, Professional Counselors, Psychology, & Social Workers: (608) 266-0145

Press 1 **Request Application**

Press 2 **Status of Pending Application**

Press 3 **Verification of Credential Holder**

Press 4 **Name and Address Change**

To request the Wisconsin Statutes and Administrative Codebook

Complaint Against Credential Holder

To Request a Duplicate Credential

Renewal of Credential

Legal Questions

Press 5 **Rotary Telephone Users**

FAX: (608) 261-7083

Quick Keys

The following voice mail “short cuts” could be sent out with renewal notices and/or otherwise published:

To request a license application for your profession, just dial (608) 266-0145, then enter the Quick Keys number below for the profession you want:

Optometry 1-5-2-1

Continuing Education Information/Application

1-5-2-2

Re-Registration

(Any profession expired 5 years or more)

Verifications

Verifications are now available online at www.drl.state.wi.us. Once you have accessed the Department website, please click on “Business and Professional License Lookup.”

If you do not use the online system, then all requests for verification of licenses/credentials should be submitted in writing. There is no charge for this service. Requests should be sent to the Department address or may be faxed to (608) 261-7083, Attention: Verifications.

Endorsements

Requests for endorsements to other states must be in writing. The cost is \$10. Please make

check or money order payable to the Department of Regulation and Licensing.

Visit the Department’s Web Site

<http://www.drl.state.wi.us/>

Send comments to dorl@drl.state.wi.us

Wisconsin Statutes and Code

Copies of the Optometry Statutes and Administrative Code can be ordered through the Board Office. Include your name, address, county and a check payable to the Department of Regulation and Licensing in the amount of \$5.28. The latest edition is dated March, 2000.

Change of Name or Address?

Please photocopy the mailing label of this digest, make changes in name or address, and return it to the Department. Confirmation of changes are not automatically provided.

WIS. STATS. S. 440.11 ALLOWS FOR A \$50 PENALTY TO BE IMPOSED WHEN CHANGES ARE NOT REPORTED WITHIN 30 DAYS.

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